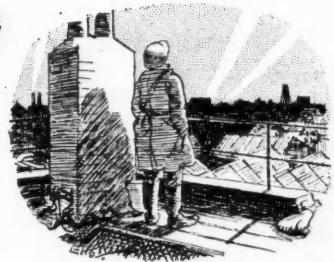




PUNCH

OR
THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCI No. 5249

October 15 1941

Charivaria

We hear that as a result of the American ballot which proclaimed Mr. CHURCHILL to be the greatest man in the world, MUSSOLINI has been summoned to the Brenner Pass to bite HITLER's moustache.

In a recent broadcast Dr. LEY boasted that in war-time Germans care little for works of art. A glance at newspaper photographs of Nazi leaders proves this.



Historical Anatomy

First line of a history paper by a nine-year-old boy: "After Charles I had his head cut off there remained the Rump."

A schoolmaster claims that Welsh is the clue to the pronunciation of foreign languages. Now all we want is a clue to the pronunciation of Welsh.

An American surgeon has broadcast details of a hospital operation. The usual practice is for this to be done afterwards by the patient.

Nettles, we are told, taste like spinach when cooked. We always thought spinach tasted like something and now we know—nettles.

According to the *Sunday Chronicle* the Rumanian Crown Jewels have been stolen by Dictator ANTONESCU. All good Nazis have to start in a small way like that.

HITLER in a recent broadcast said that at the moment he was speaking the German armies on the Eastern Front were engaged in a very important attack. Evidently taking advantage of his absence.

Impending Apology

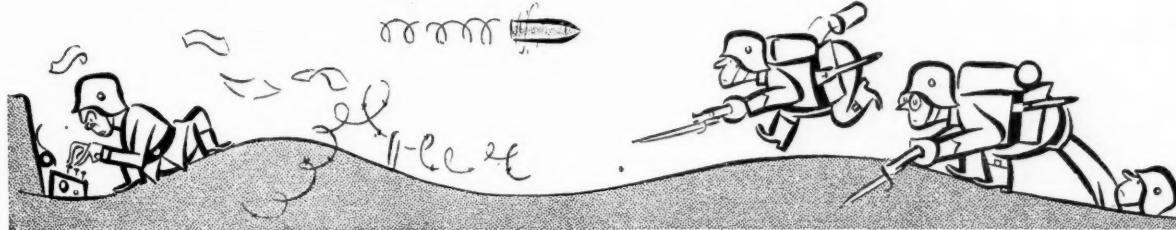
"Politics have gradually decreased the time he likes to spend with his wife."—*Evening Paper*.

A well-known broadcasting comedian always laughs at his own jokes. He explains that he might as well, because they aren't his long.



Beer will probably be weaker as the war progresses. So much for the defeatist theory that British beer simply couldn't stand another one.

A German war correspondent admits that when Nazi troops have taken one objective they have to push on without rest. To consolidate a position further ahead just taken by Dr. GOEBBELS.



The By-Election at P—

FOR more than twenty-five years (but with an interval of four) I have lived in the Borough of P—, and for most of that time I have been an elector. For the whole of that time until his recent retirement one man sat for the Borough, and sat, so far as I know, consistently and well. He did not reside in the Borough, but as though to compensate for this he did not make speeches in the House of Commons. Some have blamed him for this, but, as a regular reader of speeches made in the House of Commons, not I. If memory serves me, I never saw him; if memory serves me again—and I do not wish to exercise any Prussian tyranny over it—I never met anyone who had. Perhaps I exaggerate a little. He can scarcely have been so elusive as I think. I must have passed his kindly presence in Westminster many a time without knowing it, and I must have spoken to some who, if I had asked them, could have identified it. But I did not trouble to do so. Enough for me that I was one of his supporters.

I never voted for him. For a man of my sensitive and retiring temperament there would have seemed to be something a little blatant in such an open display of enthusiasm as to go bustling off to the poll for a candidate of whom I knew so little. I should have felt that in some vicarious way I was forcing my acquaintance upon him. If I was a stranger to him, I was a stranger also to most of my neighbours, and I can think of none of them who would have represented me more adequately than he did. Certainly not X. I have forgotten what X stood for, but it sounded rather beautiful, and he frequently asked me to vote for it and him. This annoyed me. It seemed to be an intrusion on my private affairs. Besides, he lived quite close to me, and he lacked therefore the charm that mystery alone can bring.

I have to admit that there were occasions when, laying down my pen on the completion of a strong article on "The Vote: Not a Privilege but a Duty" or "Imprisonment for Absentee Electors," I wondered whether I ought not to follow up my words by some overt deed. But relying on the usual privileges of a writer, I refrained. My province, I felt, was to exhort and to cajole. Not for me the hurly-burly of the polling-booths; and I never, in fact, found out where they were.

But I would ask the reader not to judge me too harshly. If once during all the violent political upheavals of those five and twenty years there had been any danger that our Member would be returned by fewer than twenty thousand votes I should almost certainly have cast off my hesitations and walked unflinchingly to the elementary school or whatever unpleasant spot had been appointed for the civic ordeal. But there was not ever any such danger.

Now all is changed. There are no fewer than fourteen candidates wooing the electors of the Borough of P—, and there is some doubt as to their qualifications. For one thing they all reside in the Borough, which is against them, and for another thing most of the electors do not. Everywhere one sees their houses—some pleasant, some of so surprising an ugliness as to take the breath away, with bombed windows, and broken gates, dilapidated pillars, and gardens a riot of wild flowers and strange weeds.

Thousands of refugees and members of the armed forces of the Crown inhabit the constituency. Flats are filled to overflowing with all the nations of the world, and armed sentries stand by deserted gates. No doubt many voters are left lurking in cellars and unlikely places, but the old

calm certainty of the electoral list must have been rudely disturbed, and often of course the canvassers, if there are any canvassers, will find only a few bricks and a stray cat at what was once a promising doorway for their speeches and prayers. And the candidates! I cannot name them all nor describe in full the causes for which they stand. There is "Blacker Black-outs" Robinson, who would impose a curfew at six or seven in the evenings, obscure still further the traffic-lights, and forbid all trains and buses to run so soon as darkness falls. But against him you may set "Light Up Everything" Brown, who would make the whole district, and indeed the rest of England, a blaze of electric lights and dazzle the enemy and defeat his aim. For more than twenty years he has been advocating this method of baffling hostile aircraft—for so long, in fact, that his idea has already become a new and startling crusade in one of the morning papers. In journalism it has been truly said that there is nothing old under the sun; still less, I suppose, under the moon.

There is a candidate also who would have more men for munitions, and another who would have more men for the Army. There is one who advocates elderberry wine and hip jam, and another who believes in bombing Rome. "Beat Hitler by Astrology" Jenkins is becoming a popular figure, but his meeting, I hear, was disturbed a few nights ago, since he offered free horoscopes to any members of his audience who would give him the day and the year on which they happened to be born. Two of them accepted the offer, and when he told them that they had been through many troubles but that these troubles were all fading away, that a time of prosperity was soon coming to them and they would live to be seventy-eight and seventy-nine, they informed him that they had not supplied him with the day and year of their own birth, but those of Herr Himmler and Herr Ribbentrop. He was obliged to leave the building by a back door.

And did I mention "Attack in the West" Wilson, or the Tory candidate, "More Help for Russia Immediately," and the Communist, "More Help for Russia Sooner than That"? Or the National Independent Socialist who stands solely on the ticket "What to Do about all the World directly the War is Won"?

I have written enough, I think. There is only one thing that all these would-be Members for the Borough of P— have in common. They all support the Government. At any rate they all support the Prime Minister. I think I shall vote for them all.

EVOE.

Hilfe! Hilfe!

HILFE! Hilfe! Komm, ich bitte, rasch!
Ich habe hier ein Nun mit ein Moustache!
Er sagt er ist ein Messenger of Friede
Dropt aus die Skies mit ein Velocipede,
Und hat ein freundlich Briefe mitgebracht
Addressed zu Mr. Churchill aus Herr Shaoh.
Was kann ich sag? Man darf nicht sei too böse
Mit eine schwarz-begarbed Religieuse,
Es geht against das Korn zu sag er lugt
Und ist abscheulich, widerlich, verflucht!
Ich bete any Mensch wer hat ein Gun
Zu komm und hilfe me mit meine Nun!

V. G.



THE MAN OF STRAW

"It seems ages since I scared anybody."



"I hear you've been complaining about a fox, Frisby."

Messing Arrangements

THE boat deck of the *Ashendine* was a-bustle with unwanted khaki. Half a dozen perspiring privates from the Ordnance Corps were straining, under the direction of the second mate, to prevent a Bofors gun from carrying away the port lifeboat, a couple of funnel-stays and the engine-room skylight as the derrick swung it slowly over from the wharf. Their sergeant, bereft of his legitimate command, was issuing instructions to Potter the Donkeyman, who, fortunately perhaps, is stone deaf. Finally, with a hiss of escaping steam, a clatter from the winch and a startled objurgation from the sergeant as he leaped aside more or less gracefully, the gun

made a last plunge and settled on the deck. The Defence Armament (Anti-Aircraft) was now in situ.

"Thank goodness," observed Number Two as the military filed ashore. "Those people make me nervous. I can't get used to the idea of soldiers working on a ship."

"You'd better try to get used to it right away then," said Number One.

"What do you mean?" inquired Number Three.

"Your days as Gunnery Officer, Acting, Unpaid, are at an end, Mr. Jarvis, that's what," said Number One. "A bombardier and three gunners go with this thing. They'll be coming aboard at any time."

"Well!" said Number Three indignantly—"and after all the books I've bought! They might well write in the papers about the Merchant Navy being the Cinderella of the Services."

"Did I 'ear you say," put in the Steward, "as we're going to carry soldiers in this 'ere ship?" He assumes a certain liberty of address on the strength of an unconfirmed rumour that he is the Old Man's brother-in-law.

"Yes," said Number One.

"Then where are they going to mess," he demanded, "and what are they going to eat?—that's what I'd like to know. I can't 'ardly feed all 'ands on what they send aboard as it is."

"Better ask the bloke who took all that stuff ashore at Barry," suggested Number Three.

"I'd 'ave you know," said the Steward with dignity, "as all 'e took was my personal laundry."

"Not the dickey you've been wearing since the first of May?" inquired Number Two.

"Anyway," continued the Steward, ignoring this last, "I can't be responsible for no more mouths to feed. I wash my 'ands of them."

"Do it right away," said Number One, "I'm tired of seeing fingerprints all over the bread and butter."

"Ignorance!" said the Steward loftily, and retired with an injured air to the privacy of his pantry.

"Seriously, though," said Number Three, "it is going to be a problem. They'll have to bunk somewhere amidships so as to be near the gun, but where can they mess?"

"The proper place, of course," mused Number One, "is with the apprentices."

"How do you make that out?" inquired Number Two.

"Well," said Number One, "an apprentice is more or less the same as a midshipman, R.N., isn't he?"

"More or less," agreed Number Three.

"And don't the midshipmen mess in the gunroom in a battleship?" pursued Number One.

The other two looked blank. "We'll say that they do," said Number Two, who is always fascinated by the facile reasoning of his superior.

"There you are, then!" concluded Number One. "Where else should gunners go, if not in the gunroom?"

"That's all very fine," said Number Three, who has bitter memories of the apprentices' messroom, "only you can't ever get more than two people in there at the same time, and then they have to go out in the alleyway if they want to turn round."

"Well, then," said Number One, who dislikes criticism, "what do you suggest?"

"What does it matter where they go?" said Number Two. "The grub's the same, wherever they eat it."

"That's right," said Number Three. "But it doesn't get us any further. Now, let's see, they can't go forward. There isn't any room."

"What about the Engineers' mess?" suggested Number Two.

"No!" said Number One.

"Not that, dash it all!" said Number Three. "There are limits to what even the Army should be asked to put up with."

"Well, then, it looks as if they'll have to come in with us," said Number

Two. "There's nowhere else they can go."

"We can't have them," said Number One. "It's the principle of the thing. After all, we've got to think of discipline."

"I agree with Slater," insisted Number Three. "We ought to have them in with us. We've plenty of room."

"Nothing doing," said Number One, firmly. "And you'll find that the Old Man agrees with me."

"Mr. Phelps!" Captain Henderson was returning from ashore.

"Yes, Sir?" said Number One.

"There's four soldiers joining the ship," said the Old Man, climbing from the main deck to view the gun. "You'd better get Chips to fix up two more berths in the spare cabin below."

"Aye, aye, Sir," said Number One. "And where will they mess?"

"I can't think where to put them," said the Old Man. "It's a new one on me, having soldiers aboard. They're not crew, they're not passengers, they're not even covered by a Board of Trade regulation, like Sparks. They're going to feed like fighting-cocks, though. There's a van load of stuff coming for them—here's the list; see that the Steward has it."

Number One scanned the proffered slip, noting each item. Jam, cheeses, eggs, onions (pickled), ham. . . He is a man of principle, but an opportunist first and foremost.

"If it's all right with you, Sir," he said, "I think we ought to have them in with us."

Limitations

(A Definition of Policy)

WHAT can I do to prove, say you,
My love is constant? What?
Well, I don't know. There are things
I'll do
And other things I'll not.

I will pay for your mother's cigarettes
But not for your dad's cigars;
I will pay for your cats while at the vet's
But not if they ride in cars;

I will be polite to your Cousin Jean
But not to your Aunty Mabel;
I will keep my bedroom cupboard clean
But not my study table;

I will get the barber to cut my locks
But not my beard, my love;
I will water the ground-floor window-box
But not the one above;

I will try my best to appear more spruce
(A prickly kind of tree),
But I will not dress like a charlotte russe
To please my wife. Not me.

What can I do for you? God wot,
O moon of my delight!
I can wash this morning's dishes but not
The ones from dinner last night.

How can I show you now and here
I love you better than jam?
Well, as I say, there are things . . . yes,
dear . . .
And other things . . . no, ma'am.



"If Mrs. Puddicombe should ring, tell her I'm out."

At the Pictures

BIG STUFF

Forty - Ninth Parallel (Director:

MICHAEL POWELL), unlike most much-heralded pictures, can by no means be called a disappointment. Since the story deals with the travels across Canada of an escaping U-boat crew it is inevitably episodic; but all the same it adds up to an interesting, entertaining, stimulating and in places very exciting bit of work.

This is a story-with-a-purpose, a propaganda story if you like, and it is possible to isolate the ingredients and guess at the precise reason for the presence of each. The U-boat party has to contain several different types of Nazis, and the story has to concentrate on one, the most unbending of the lot; and on their journey they have to encounter successively all the most obvious types on the other side. Thus a certain scrappiness, a regular up-and-down of tension, is unavoidable. The link that holds it all together is *Hirth* (ERIC PORTMAN); not only because by the end he is the sole survivor of the crew, but also because he is the strongest representative of the idea, such as it is, of his side: he sums up the fanatical, inflexible, ruthless Nazi mind, which it is necessary for this picture to show in conflict with all the different kinds of opposition. Mr. PORTMAN plays this disgusting character exceedingly well.

For the rest, it is a question of judging the episodes, almost independently. LAURENCE OLIVIER contributes a brilliant little study of a French-Canadian trapper; LESLIE HOWARD is his charming, whimsical, "English" self as a writer delighted to find that, when stung hard enough, he can turn into a man of action; RAYMOND MASSEY is the Canadian soldier who achieves the ambition of all Canadian soldiers, a

one-man fight with the other side. ANTON WALBROOK represents the simple and direct appeal to the audience: he makes a speech, and they applaud. There is no point in recommending this picture to readers

always been what happened after the picture was over. It's all very well to show everybody reconciled, the hard softened, the little man triumphant, graft exposed—but did it last? If it did, how? The point arises with just as much force in Mr. CAPRA's new one, *Meet John Doe*, wherein once more at the end we have a glimpse of EDWARD ARNOLD softened up after ninety minutes of hard-headed face-grinding Fascism. (I have a wild desire to see Mr. ARNOLD, just once, as a poet starving in a garret.)

The basic situation here is something the same as that in *Mr. Deeds*—the down-and-out and the newspaper woman—but the overtones have been made more impressive: it is "the state of civilization" against which *John Doe* is to protest by jumping off the City Hall. It seems odd, and is probably significant, that in Mr. CAPRA's three most passionate defences of the "little man" (*Mr. Deeds*, *Mr. Smith*, *John Doe*) the actor representing that

insignificant personage has been six foot two and over. I believe that sums up what's wrong with CAPRA pictures, if I may be permitted to suggest that there's anything wrong with them:

they exploit the sympathy and admiration you already have for the large attractive man by encouraging you to believe that you are really admiring and sympathizing with a little, ordinary, dull fellow with no personality whatever. This comes sadly near to a charge of sentimentalism and insincerity, and I haven't the nerve to pursue it.

But Mr. CAPRA's technical merits as a director are indisputable. The film is beautifully done. GARY COOPER and BARBARA STANWYCK are both first-rate, and nearly everybody else in a long cast-list has at least one memorable moment. You should see it, and it will entertain, amuse and perhaps move you; all I suggest is that if you have a tendency to notice Mr. CAPRA's faults, you will find them this time very much in evidence. R. M.



THE TRAPPER'S RETURN—WITH FUR

The Factor FINLAY CURRIE
Johnnie LAURENCE OLIVIER

most of whom are probably already standing in a queue for it.

One interesting thing about the stories of FRANK CAPRA pictures has



[Meet John Doe]

GOOD MAN MEETS BAD MAN.

John Doe GARY COOPER
D. B. Norton EDWARD ARNOLD

Travel

"No, dear, I *don't* look tired. I don't know what makes you say such a thing. Naturally, a journey is a *journey* nowadays, and I'm most grateful to you for coming to meet the bus—don't touch that suitcase on any account, it's the most extraordinary weight; it has been, all along. No, dear, I can't tell you why. I have no idea whatever. A tooth-brush and a nightdress and a couple of little bedside books never seem to me to weigh very much. Yet the *moment* one puts them into a suitcase they become quite extraordinarily heavy. Even the sailor who so kindly lifted it down for me at Cheltenham uttered some exclamation. Oh, nothing in any way objectionable—merely an exclamation."

"But do let me—"

"No, dear. You might strain yourself quite seriously and perhaps be injured for life."

"But so might you."

"The mischief must be done by now. I had to carry it all over Cheltenham, practically, and the little attaché-case—which is far heavier than it looks—and my handbag, and the egg-box, and the basket."

"Why did you do that, Miss Littlemug?"

"I was looking for lunch, dear. I had an hour to wait between buses and I thought—ha-ha-ha—that I'd get myself some food. Forgive me if I laugh."

"Were you laughing?"

"In a sense, dear. Mercifully, I have a sense of humour. Just let me lift this into the back of the— No, really, I can do it better single-handed. Good heavens, was that your arm? I'm so sorry—it was just the corner of the suitcase. I didn't realize it was going to wedge itself between— All right, dear! Only the tale. No glass. I'll replace it. Now the little attaché-case—I'll just throw it into the corner—No, all right, no harm done—I remembered that wretched egg-box just in time. At least I *hope* it was just in time. So good of them to let me have eggs—but I don't like the *sound* of the box when I shake it, somehow. I haven't felt happy about it since Cheltenham. However, we shall know quite soon enough. *Sure* the basket isn't in the way of the gears, dear? *Or* my leg? I can easily move either... Very well then, let's fly like the wind. You were asking me about Cheltenham, I think."

"Weren't you able to get any lunch there?"



"I feel certain we're going to win a considerable victory very soon—none of our newspaper astrologers give the slightest hint of one."

"Dear—forgive me for laughing—I couldn't have got a crumb of bread if I'd knelt in the middle of the main street begging and praying for it all day long."

"I hope you didn't have to do that, Miss Littlemug."

"No, dear, I didn't. I merely walked from shop to shop and saw that every place was full already and that in any case I hadn't time to go far from the bus dépôt, and an extremely kind policeman helped me with these bags and told me I might get a cup of tea in the café. Ha-ha-ha!"

"Oh, dear!"

"Naturally, dear, when I saw the queue I simply staggered away quite quietly with all these bags—one of which most unfortunately dropped on to a dear little child in a push-chair, but no harm done, I'm thankful to say—and if I asked which was the right bus for Greater Fiddle once, I must have asked fifteen times."

"Couldn't anybody tell you?"

"Yes, dear, everybody told me. Most people thought it was the red bus marked East Kent, or else the black-and-white Midlands one, but quite

a number of West-country travellers were bent on getting into the York and Scarborough coach. It was just one of those rumours that happen to get about."

"Weren't there any buses labelled for the West-country?"

"One or two, dear. They were going to North Wales and the South Coast, I believe—except the one that people seemed to think might really be going to the Lake District."

"But why—?"

"Just a war-time measure, dear. The counties lend their buses to one another. A very nice Oxford bus brought me here. It started quite punctually; in fact I very nearly got left behind, which accounts for the state of my leg."

"Your leg, Miss Littlemug?"

"Yes, dear. I cut it nearly to ribbons in the scramble. Still, there it is. One's arrived."

"Yes, indeed. I hope you'll be able to rest when you get home."

"No, dear. The first thing will be to telephone to every single place I can think of where I could possibly have left my gas-mask." E. M. D.



"Can you move back a bit, Sidney?"

Tee for Three

BUT for Russell I should have said Straw plays the worst golf in the world.

When we agreed to play a three-ball and asked each other how we all played, Straw said he used to be about fourteen or fifteen, but of course he hadn't had a game for centuries and probably wouldn't be able to hit a thing. Russell said that was about his mark in the old days, but he'd had only one game since the war started and then he'd played more like an eighteen than a twelve—or thirteen. I think he added the "thirteen" out of modesty.

As soon as I heard them talking like this I knew it was going to be all right. Whenever a man talks of his handicap as "about" fourteen you know he's just an ordinary downright liar. Golfers know what their handicaps are and say so. I'm a golfer myself and I always say "eighteen" when asked, and leave it at that. I am not, as a matter of fact, eighteen in the narrow sense of the word, never having actually bothered to put in a card, but I am essentially an eighteen man. It isn't that I claim to be able to go round a course with a par of seventy-two in ninety strokes; nothing of the kind has ever occurred to me. I am only saying that when I come up against opponents who also say they are eighteen I am not generally beaten—or not by much. And when I meet men who say they used to be about fourteen or fifteen I thrash them.

I should have thrashed Russell and Straw, given a bit of luck.

Russell stands well behind his ball on the tee and lays

the head of his driver firmly on the ground some distance to the rear. Then he gazes fixedly at the club for a long, long time, making neither sound nor movement. I asked him why he did this and he said "Don't talk when I'm playing." I said I wouldn't dream of talking when he was playing, but in my view mere immobility could not possibly be said to constitute play, except perhaps at cricket.

"Can he be this Frozen Asset we hear so much about?" suggested Straw.

"Do you mean Frozen Liability?" I asked. I have rather a gift for saying good things on the spur of the moment, or so my family says. Russell said we were putting him off, but he didn't say off what.

I hate exaggeration, so I'm not going to try to pretend that Russell simply lays the club-head behind the ball and does nothing at all any more until it is time to go home. He spends, I suppose, about the time it used to take to boil an egg over this process. Then he lifts the club and waves it to and fro above the ball perhaps ten or a dozen times. This puts the ball into a hypnotic sleep and may be done out of pure kind-heartedness. After that Russell lays the club down again and goes into another trance—a secondary and much shorter trance, for in less than a minute he is back at his wagging again, *to and fro, to and fro*. By the time he lays the club on the ground for the third time the ball is unconscious.

"The B.B.C. ought to use him as an interval signal," whispered Straw. "Tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock—ta-ta-Ra."

Russell says it was this whispering, just as he was in the middle of his swing, that made him slice into the long grass about eighty yards to the Nor-nor-east, and later on Straw and I agreed he was probably right. During the rest of the round we refrained from whispering and he never got so far again.

Straw favours an angular stance on the tee. He lays the tip of the little finger of his right hand alongside the tip of the forefinger of his left and allows the shaft of his driver to rest delicately for a moment against his out-stretched fingers. Then he closes the right hand very deliberately round the club, at the same time turning his wrist over so that the back of his hand faces the way he thinks he is going to drive. He does the same thing, only in the reverse direction, with his left wrist; and there he is, toes turned in and elbows sticking out, like a man riding a bicycle three sizes too small for him. It looks impossible to hit the ball properly from this position, and for all the evidence Straw produced to the contrary, it probably is.

"Why do you do it, Straw?" I asked him, as we ferreted about in the long grass twenty yards to the left of the tee.

"Grip," he said tersely, and I left it at that. A man who thinks that the whole secret of golf lies in Grip is beyond the reach of reason.

While we were looking for Straw's ball I happened to find mine. I thought it had gone further, for I put a lot of weight behind the drive, but of course long wet grass robs one of a lot of distance.

"You take longer addressing your ball than anyone I ever knew," said Russell, as I chipped or, to be frank, hacked out on to the fairway.

I could hardly believe my ears. My own manner on the tee approximates, I always maintain, to the perfect norm. I am neither slow nor flurried. I lay the club-head on the ground behind the ball and straddle my feet until they are equidistant from it fore and aft—that is, the left foot is as far in front of the ball as the right foot is behind it. Then, gripping the club firmly but naturally, I back away until I feel comfortable. Sometimes I back too far and have to come in again, but very soon, by this sort of "bracketing,"



"One can only presume that, for some reason, the Germans considered it was worth preserving."

as we call it in the Artillery, I hit the right spot and settle down. I like to twist about a bit on the balls of my feet at this stage, as I think it helps me to get a firm grip of the ground. That is really about all there is to it. One or two waggles to make sure my feet are right, perhaps a slight adjustment of the left foot, or the right, or sometimes both, another waggle and I'm off. Slow back, a slight pause at the top of the swing, and then, if I feel easy and comfortable, the long downward stroke with the left arm doing the work and the wrists straightening out with a snap at the moment of impact. If I don't feel right at the top of the back-swing I cut my losses and start again, as anyone would. That Russell of all people should say I am slow doesn't annoy me; it amuses me.

Another day perhaps, when I have more time, I will try to describe the rest of the round. H. F. E.

Modified Ideal

IT is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make man better be,"
The poet said. Had he been out
Performing as a Home Guard scout,
He would have found it to the good
To grow as tree-like as he could,
Affording the opposing eye
No human trait to know him by;
His whole ambition would have shrunk
To emulate a lichenized trunk.
We have a man in my Platoon
Whose hair will change to foliage soon,
His limbs to boughs, and he'll be found
Fixed, rigid, rooted to the ground,
With sluggish sap for blood endued,
In an arboreal attitude,
In perfect camouflage content—
His own appropriate monument! W. K. H.

SIRENS . . .

ONE never knows where the attack will fall, but when it does it is bound to mean that more people need the immediate help of food, clothing, money, hospital treatment and the wherewithal to carry on. *Punch*, through its COMFORTS FUND, endeavours to be a good neighbour to them all.

Will you please help us in the good work? We would be so grateful if you could send a contribution, however small. Donations will be gratefully received and acknowledged by Mr. Punch at PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

Bright Idea

"Stated by the prosecution to have committed a 'scandalous deception' by selling an article described as sugar substitute which was 99.957 per cent. wheat flour and .043 per cent. soluble old lacquer firescreen, hand- T. P. Parry, of Peter St. was fined £20 at Sunderland."—*Glasgow Paper*.

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"The Japanese are known for their magnanimity and adaptability, accepting everything and everybody that comes, either friendly or hostile. They are tender-hearted and merciful, and they love peace. They are artistic and tasteful, and adapt themselves to any situation if need be. Indeed they can well be compared to a string of beads, subtle and mysterious."—*Cultural Nippon*.
And close together.



"Personally I found I effected quite a considerable economy in tobacco when I began smoking the pipe the other way up."



"You'll have to be more careful, Mary, when you start handling sixteen-inch shells."

'Flu

(The capture of the germ of influenza is reported from America.)

THE MAN OF SCIENCE

I AM a Man of Science.
I've collared the germ of 'flu;
I sought my prey for a year and a day
And stuck to his trail like glue,
And now that he's fast in a cage at last
I'm wondering what to do.

THE DOCTORS

We are the medical practitioners,
And 'flu is a foul complaint,
It robs G.P.s of their well-earned ease,
And their chance of a meal grows faint.
It's good no doubt when the bills go out
But in other respects it ain't.

THE PUBLIC

We are the creature's victims,
And this is an evil germ,

A venomous thing with a bite (or sting)
That makes one crawl like a worm,
And now that he's dragged from his lair and bagged
We hope that they'll make him squirm.

THE MICROBE

I am the Influenza Microbe
Caught by a deep-laid plan;
I may have a flaw—it's a natural law—
But how am I worse than man?
I've an absolute right to take my bite
And a sup as best I can.

TO THE MAN OF SCIENCE

I am a simple thinker,
Unnoticed and unrenowned,
But the thing you've caught, to my simple thought,
Is much better lost than found,
And unless you're a mug you'll kill that bug—
Choke it or have it drowned. DUM-DUM.



SAVE FOR VICTORY!

[From October 18th onwards every city, town and rural community has been asked to organize a Warship Week in order to raise in War Savings a sum of money equivalent to the cost of some kind of warship, ranging from a Battleship to a Harbour Defence Craft. City, town or village, they will be entitled to "adopt" one of H.M. ships, and mementoes of this will be interchanged—one to hang in the Town Hall, the other to be displayed on the Quarterdeck. October 18th has been chosen for the beginning of this Savings Campaign because it is the nearest Saturday to Trafalgar Day. What is your warship to be?]

Little Talks

TEN shillings. It's absolutely marvellous.

What?

The wireless. The B.B.C.

Oh, come, I say! The B.B.C.? Marvellous? Why yesterday I had to switch off the most awful Talk I ever heard. Something about bees.

But I dare say you switched over to the Forces and had a nice wallow in organ-music.

Well, as a matter of fact, I did. I don't mind a bit of music. As a matter of fact I don't listen very much. Only music. And Winston of course. And some of those postscripts aren't bad. And I like that gardening bloke. Oh, and the Brains Trust when it's not too brainy.

And the News?

Oh yes, the News. But, of course, there never is any.

I know. It's extraordinary. A cosmic mess, and never any news. Anyhow, I gather you do a good bit of switching-off.

Oh, well—

And even at that, I feel, you get your money's worth. Take the News, for example. How many Newses are there a day?

One, two—five. No, six.

Six. At an average of ten minutes, say, that's sixty minutes a day—420 minutes a week, and 21,840 minutes a year.

Golly!

Now, you pay ten shillings a year?

As a matter of fact I'm not sure I pay a thing.

Well, we'll give you the benefit of the doubt. And I reckon that works out at 182 minutes—or more than three hours of news for a penny. Pretty good value.

If there was any news.

Well, if you don't care for the news let's have a look at the rest. Here are the programmes for the week. The Forces programme begins at 6.30 (I beg your pardon—0630), and ends at 11.0 p.m. (or 2300, as the Forces call it). That's 15½ hours—

16½.

How right you are! Well, I make that 115½ hours a week—and 6,006 hours a year.

What a brain!

The Home programme begins at 7.0, and ends at midnight.

17 hours.

119 hours a week.

And 6,188 hours a year.

Really, the Brains Trust has nothing on you and me.

Well—so what?

Well, in the Forces programme I reckon you get 50 hours' entertainment for one penny—

50?

50·05, to be precise. And in the Home programme you get 51·5 hours for every penny you spend on your licence—

I don't think I do.

Never mind. I do. And I must say that, even allowing for an occasional switch-off, two days', two solid days' entertainment for one penny is fairly generous value.

And nearly all that time, of course, there are two lots of the nonsense going on, so that if you have two sets you can do a double switch-off.

How you must love switching off!

It's a big thing. I often wish one could do it elsewhere. Public dinners, bad sermons, and so forth.

In the House of Lords, of course, they've got it. Anyone can get up and move "That the Noble Lord be no more heard."

Jolly good show. But a bit embarrassing, isn't it? What I like is switching off rudely and saying "Ha, ha! You think I'm still listening to you, old bore, but I'm not!"

Well, anyhow, you've got to admit it's a whale of a business, the organization. Just look at Monday, now. Thirty-nine items in the Forces programme—and forty in the Home.

Seventy-nine switch-offs in a day. Grand!

Yes, but just imagine having to get them all together, fit them all in, and dish them up at the right time. All the talks that have to be vetted, and censored, and cut, and sometimes rehearsed, all the plays that have to be rehearsed, and timed, and—

Switched off.

And all this, not one day but every day, for ever!

Ghastly thought!

I can't think how they ever begin. How would you begin?

Begin?

Well, say they gave you the whole of next Monday to fill up—what would you do?

Golly! Well—well—oh, well, I should have the News, of course—

I thought there wasn't any.

Oh, well, one must have the News—to set one's watch.

All right. And then—?

Oh, well, then I should have the organ for an hour or two.

Yes? And after that?

I dunno. Perhaps I'd leave the organ on.

But some people don't like the organ. Then they can switch off.

I see. Well, you've got the News—60 minutes, and the organ—about how many hours of organ would you give us?

Say, six.

Seven hours altogether. So you've still got ten hours to fill in the Home programme, to say nothing of the Forces.

I should give the Forces twelve hours of organ.

Well, that leaves three and a half hours. And you've got to fill every minute of them.

Why?

I don't quite know. But it seems to be generally accepted that if there's a second's silence on the air—anywhere—it's a bad thing, and civilisation is practically at an end.

Well, I don't agree.

Maybe. And maybe you're right. But those are the rules of the poor old B.B.C. So let's go on with your programme. You've still got ten hours of the Home programme to go.

Oh, well, of course, I should have Winston on every Sunday evening.

But we're talking about Monday. And as a matter of fact, if you put even Winston on for four Sundays running a good many people would begin to say that really he was rather a bore.

I shouldn't, old boy.

Nor should I. But lots would. And I'm not at all sure that a professional switcher-off like you wouldn't join them pretty soon. So you begin to see—

How difficult you are!

How difficult it is. However, let's get on. I've got to go. You've only ten hours more of Monday to fill. Then we can get on with Tuesday.

With what?

Tuesday. And Wednesday. And Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. And November, December, January, February—

Here, stop a minute!

And 1942, '43, '44, '45—

Hey!

What?

Well, I didn't bargain for all that.

No? I'm surprised. Well, so long.

Here! Hey! Hi! Stop!

What's the matter?

I've got an idea.

Sorry. I'm switching off.

A. P. H.

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done

Tuesday, October 7th.—House of Commons: A Statement on Wounded Prisoners; A Discussion on the Oxford Group.



"With stern judicial frame of mind,
From bias free of every kind."

"Trial by Jury."

"I beg Hon. Members who have prejudices
... to be like me—perfectly impartial."
Mr. Bevin, on the Oxford Group.

Wednesday, October 8th.—House of Lords: The Oxford Group (continued).

House of Commons: Debate on Man-Power.

Thursday, October 9th.—House of Commons: Agriculture is debated—and a domestic matter.

Tuesday, October 7th.—It is a great thing, is it not, that in the midst of the most gigantic struggle this country has had to wage, Parliament can spare time to consider matters of sentiment and conscience?

To-day, with complete good temper—albeit with some hard hitting—questions affecting both were raised.

Captain DAVID MARGESSON, War Minister, made a long statement telling the whole story of the failure of negotiations to exchange German for British wounded prisoners of war. The negotiations had gone on for some time, with the Geneva Convention as their basis. This provided that the prisoners were to be exchanged without regard to rank or numbers. All went well until it was discovered that (because of the accidents of war) we could offer only 100 or so against the

1,250 or more the Germans had. So we offered to throw in (so to speak) some women and over-age men to build up our numbers.

This seemed to please the German Government, but, our men having been taken to a French Channel port and the Germans to Newhaven, all ready for the homeward journey, it was found that the Germans would insist on a man-for-man exchange. So, reluctantly but resolutely, we had called the whole thing off rather than risk being the victims of a gross breach of faith.

One could almost hear the disappointed sighs of the relatives (on both sides, doubtless) who had hoped to welcome home their dear ones. Somehow it seemed, this comparatively trifling incident, to bring home more vividly than some great epic story, the grimness of war.

Apart from one long rumbling cheer, the House let the statement go in silence. To such tactics as those of the Nazis there can be only one reply.

Then the House considered a Bill moved by Mr. HERBERT MORRISON, Home Secretary, to prolong the life of Parliament by another year, general elections not being specially conducive to concentration on the war effort.

The HOME SECRETARY was careful to explain that this Bill did not give Parliament eternal life. Rather surprisingly a considerable part of the subsequent debate was devoted to ensuring that this was made certain. M.P.s evidently prefer to have their life-blood (donated—as they have it across the Atlantic—by the electors) renewed regularly. The Mother of Parliaments and Methuselah have little in common, it seems.

Over the delicately thin ice of how soon the election should be held after the war ends, Mr. MORRISON skated with skill.

Then the affairs of the Oxford Group engaged the attention of the Commons. Mr. MATHERS asked that the eleven full-time evangelists engaged by the movement should be given exemption from military service. In a speech that was measured in everything except its length, he appealed to the Minister of Labour, Mr. ERNEST BEVIN, to reverse his decision that the eleven must go into the Services when the call came. In this, said Mr. MATHERS, the Oxford Group would then be treated in the same way as every other religious body.

He proceeded to overload the argument (which really was a simple one) with such a wealth of citation and precedent and opinion and comment

and re-argument, and round the whole lot again, that the House wearied of it. After nearly an hour he sat down and left the floor to Mr. BEVIN.

That redoubtable Minister, having made the somewhat surprising revelation that the study of comparative theology is one of his hobbies, proceeded to wade into the case made by Mr. MATHERS. The nation, said he, would think more of the Group if it took its corner of the war effort. In any case, he could not grant exemption to the eleven without giving the same privilege to a cloud of Jehovah's Witnesses and others. He did not want to destroy the Oxford Group movement, and did not think he was doing so.

One of his best speeches, and admirably short.

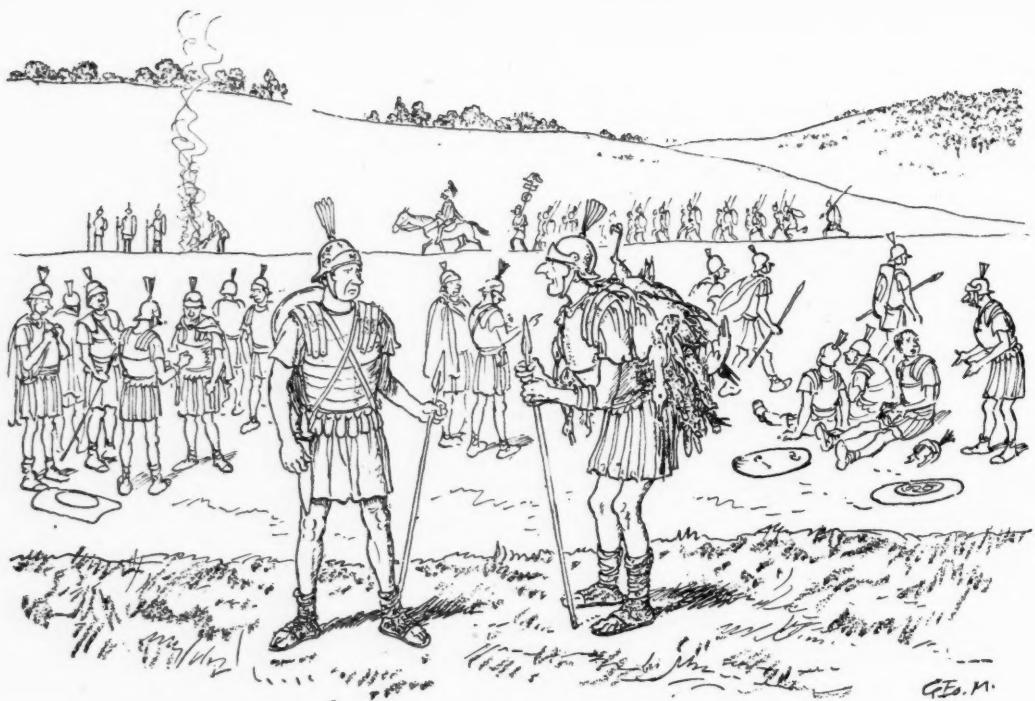
Then Petty Officer A. P. HERBERT had a few acid things to say on (1) the continued wickedness of the Group in appropriating—or misappropriating—the name of Oxford; (2) the fact that the movement was a Limited Company; (3) the attitude of "The Master"—Dr. FRANK BUCHMAN—to HITLER and all his works; (4) the attitude of that gentleman to Britain and all its war effort.



JIM-OUT-OF-THE-BOX

In the debate on man-power, Mr. WALKER pops up to demand the nationalization of Industry.

Like the barrister that he is, A.P.H. produced a variety of documents (including *Who's Who*) in support of his case that the Oxford Group deserved no special consideration. The SPEAKER intervened to point out that, if a division were to be taken, it



"When you've been as long in the army as I have, my lad, you'll just take the rough with the smooth."

must be soon, because of the Rules. But nobody seemed to want a division, and the whole thing fizzled out.

Wednesday, October 8th.—Mr. ANTHONY EDEN, Foreign Secretary, is evidently a student of cookery books. Asked to-day to treat the fugitive and extremely elusive Grand Mufti as the enemy of Britain that he is, Mr. EDEN replied that he preferred first to catch his Mufti.

Mr. BRENDAN BRACKEN (as in duty bound—other Ministers, please note) defended his particular charges, the Press. Complaint was made that there had appeared in a newspaper a picture of British girls and Italian prisoners of war fraternizing—if such is the correct term for the association of assorted sexes. Such things, said B. B., were matters of taste, and he was not Director of Taste in this country.

Mr. WILL THORNE, looking more boyish than ever, received loud cheers on the attainment of his (believe it or not) eighty-fourth birthday.

The House proceeded to a discussion on man-power. This word covers a multitude of subjects, not one of which failed to find its exponent.

Nobody seemed to take over-much notice of the discussion. Quite the best speech on man-power was (paradoxically—or is it?) on woman-power. The speaker was that very polished but far too infrequent orator, Miss MEGAN LLOYD GEORGE.

Over in the Lords the Oxford Group was again the subject of dignified discussion—with the same result as in the Commons.

Thursday, October 9th.—Another secret session gave a touch of normality to the proceedings. After which Sir ADAM MAITLAND introduced an abnormal touch by resigning with three other members from the Select Committee on Expenditure (the Anti-Waste Committee) on the ground that a report of the Sub-Committee had been pigeon-holed by the main Committee.

The debate on this not unimportant matter will be continued anon.

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Impending Apology

“LADY, newcomer to Worthing, would like to meet a few intelligent human beings.”

Advt. in Worthing Paper.

A WAY TO GIVE THANKS

THE Empire Mothers Fund, among the Patrons of which are the Duchess of NORFOLK, the Duchess of SUTHERLAND, and the Lady Mayoress of LONDON, was originally started as a Hurricane Fund; now, to make it a more lasting tribute of gratitude to the R.A.F., it has been extended to provide Scholarships for the sons and daughters of R.A.F. members. These Scholarships will be awarded on the result of a qualifying written examination and an interview at which the candidate's school record will be considered. Donations to the Fund will be gratefully received by any branch of the Westminster Bank, or may be addressed to the Hon. Treasurer, Empire Mothers Fund, Westminster Bank Ltd., 1 Stratford Place, London, W.1.

Secrecy

From Sapper Smith to Mrs. Sapper Smith.

GUMPTON PARVA,

September 1st

DEAREST ONE,—Do not on any account be alarmed, but I am likely to have some news for you soon. We know where we are going and when, but the Major gave us a most impressive talk this morning about not letting anything leak out; so I must not even tell you that we are going to move, but do not be surprised if you get a surprise in the next letter or so.

Your loving husband,

EDGAR.

September 3rd

DEAREST ONE,—You might very easily have got me in the cart with that postcard of yours asking me just to tell you if it was abroad or not. Luckily the Major nor nobody saw it, or they would have thought I had told you we were going to move, which I am sure I did not, merely to await developments, even if what I thought was true had been, but actually it seems to have been a red herring, though none of us like the idea the Major does not trust us.

This is really to say, however, that it is quite impossible to say whether abroad or not, although now we really know, a fellow in Company Office having seen a letter quite openly about laundry, which just shows all the leakage isn't from the men.

Do not on any account refer to what I have told you or not told you on a postcard or even inside a letter.

Your loving husband,

EDGAR.

September 6th

DEAREST ONE,—It is not fair of you to say that you are sure we are going abroad because if we were not there would have been no secret about it. As the Major explained this morning, if we only made a secret of it when we were going abroad, then people would know as soon as we started making a secret of it that we were really going abroad, so now we have to make a secret of it whether we are going abroad or not, and to make assurance doubly sure we do not even hint about moving at all, which explains my silence on the subject.

Your loving husband,

EDGAR.



"Any day now he'll be saying his first 'Heil Hitler'."

September 8th

DEAREST ONE,—You say that you have been kept awake at night picturing me frozen in icy wastes or burned 'neath the tropic sun.

I wish I could set your mind at rest, but to do so would of course mean giving the game away and this might be of great use to Hitler if we were really not going abroad, or even if we were.

Hoping this will satisfy you as far as I am permitted.

Your loving husband,

EDGAR.

September 10th

DEAREST ONE,—Well, I can tell you

all now, and am only sorry it has dragged on for so long. The truth is that we are remaining in Gumption Parva for the present, but the Major told us to practise not writing home if we thought we were going to move, and on the whole I think I did it rather well, don't you?

Your loving husband,

EDGAR.

“It seems, therefore, that if stereoscopic cinema films are not just round the corner, they are nevertheless in sight.”

Amateur Cine World.

As EINSTEIN might say.



"Yes, I know just what you're going to say. You were in the Air Force in the last war, in the days of the old R.F.C., the Royal Flying Corps . . ."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

America in China

In the autumn of 1938 the twenty-three-year-old daughter of a family of American musicians was sent to report on Chinese affairs for the United American Relief Boards. *Dawn Watch in China* (COLLINS, 12/6) is a by-product of this great adventure: a year's travel in the war-zone followed by an epilogue of first-rate importance when the writer was bidden proceed with her information to Japan. Under the aegis of American medical missionaries Miss Joy HOMER entered Wenchow through a minefield and penetrated West as far as Chengtu and north as far as Yenan. Of Japanese crimes and blunders, of heroic Chinese resistance she witnessed enough and to spare. To the realism of oriental Christianity, with its harvest of self-sacrifice among the Chinese and compunction among their enemies, she pays the surprised tribute of a convert. In Japan her revelations were received with incredulity and horror. The war, she learnt, was an affair of inner military cliques, its conduct, very largely, of individual generals. "Tell your people," she was urged, "to place a complete embargo on war material for Japan." It would be "an act of mercy to us as well as an act of justice to China."

Genius and the Landlord

What, one wonders, can be done about the "plain man" who has no use for art and the "artist" who has no use for the plain man? The gulf might be bridged—and perhaps its extremist flanks eliminated—by fostering home-produced art at the expense, if necessary, of the mass-produced home and the professional artist: with CROMWELL and PEPYS and their chamber-music as the ideal. Mr. FRANK BAKER's *Joey Becker*, who composes hymns in his off-time, has the heart of the matter in him; *Joey's* son *Kenneth*, who loathes music, is a mere robot; and

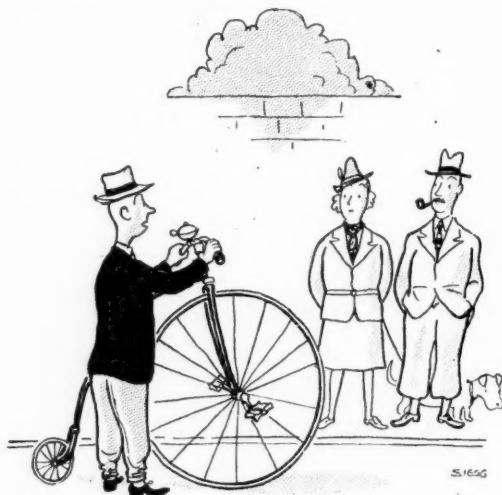
Joey's lodger *Bate*, who lives to express himself in crotchetts and quavers, a mere escapist. But what a world, as most of its denizens poignantly remark, to escape from! A squalid South Wales town, with an as yet undesecrated Usk village hard by to stand for the mirage of beauty to *Bate* and a nucleus for "development" to *Kenneth Allanay* (EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE, 9/-) exhibits a vivid clash of temperaments—for the luckless *Joey* and the still more luckless *Mrs. Joey* have the two extremists to cope with; but it has started more ethical and aesthetic hares than it has time effectively to course.

A Book of Birds

Mr. ERIC PARKER has given us a jewel of a book in *World of Birds* (LONGMANS, 8/6). It is not only that it is full of the light of soft English skies, wind in the trees of English gardens and cherry petals on their grass, it is also a most excellent guide to an interest, possible for almost everyone, the study of bird-life. Clouds of birds wing and sing their way through Mr. PARKER's pages, watched with the keenest eyes, described with a love that makes the author almost lyrical and yet with scientific exactness. Strange little-known facts, such as the curlew's odd habit of ejecting the lining of its gizzard or the changes that have taken place in the ways of life of sea-gulls and starlings, are there for the interest of the initiated. The ignorant lover of birds will find much to enlighten him and there are some bold conclusions from observations over many years, for instance, in regard to the drumming of the spotted woodpecker, that are a challenge to merely traditional beliefs.

Tangled Web

However much the title of Miss BEATRICE KEAN SEYMOUR's book, *Happy Ever After* (HEINEMANN, 8/6), may puzzle readers who expect a story with the conventional fairy-tale ending, they are not likely to be dissatisfied. In the fourth chapter *Brenda Martindale* marries *Luke*, an attractive young waster, and finds out on a Riviera honey moon that he is a helpless gambler. Their first child dies; the second, *Dale*, is a little horror of a girl and much spoiled



"Ob, yes, it's secondhand."



OWING TO PRESSURE FROM THE ALL-HIGHEST, HIS ORIENTAL ALLY IS FORMING A MAGIC CARPET BOMBING SQUADRON.

George Morrow, October 17th, 1917

because her mother tries to make up for some of the misery caused at school by *Luke's* disgrace. When he disappears and *Brenda* takes a cottage in Devonshire, the girl announces he is dead—an embarrassing lie, since his "widow" is attractive enough to be courted again. It would not be fair to give away more of the plot, for Miss KEAN SEYMOUR has added some of the ingredients of a thriller—blackmail and manslaughter—to a most moving and interesting psychological study. *Brenda* is a first-class character, never smug or discontented in her self-sacrificing life, and well worth meeting.

Pirate of Hearts

In *Frenchman's Creek* (GOLLANZ, 8/-) Miss DAPHNE DU MAURIER has given us a tale of piracy, danger and love.

Her heroine, *Dona St. Columb*, is a beautiful young married woman who, when she grew tired of romping round court circles or pretending to be a highwayman or visiting taverns with her husband's friends, drove down to his house on the Helford River because she wanted to lead a simple life with her children. The hero is a French pirate who, until *Dona's* arrival, sometimes slept in her bed where he gazed at her portrait, read RONSARD and smoked strong tobacco. Naturally, since *Dona's* butler was the pirate's servant too, they met, and Romance with a very big capital began. *Dona* turned cabin-boy, there was murder and very nearly a hanging. It is an exciting story but a bit too picturesque, for the lady was more lovely than laudable and the Frenchman's artistic temperament scarcely excused his piracy, though it helped him to make love with gentleness, swagger and magnificence.



"Excuse me, but would you lend me your walking-stick? We want to knock down little Wilfred's football."

The Sickret Edgancy

THIS bleck-out is very sirrious in London," said Captain Romanescu as we blinked our way into the lighted lounge. "In Borella it is the semm. Poliss is very strict. In Balkania et first was very good system about this bleck-out. My friend Miranos has invented it. By law of Balkanian Government everywhere is bleck-out—absolute—but if you like you can buy licence for lights

for one month: two-hundred *tekani* for motor-car headlight, three-hundred *tekani* for hundred-watt lamp shining outside, thousand *tekani* for edvertising sign, end so on. This is better then English system, I think. Very profitable for firm collecting this texetion. Also, not so dark. Bot when German penzer divisions comms to Balkania for holiday they stop all this.

"I em telling you before," went on

Romanescu when we had been served, "how my flegsheep, *Astra Balkana*, is sonk by somm eccidents. Soon after this there is order from Minister of Nevvy for tekking to sea other cruiser, *Principele Mikelu Giorgescu*. This is bedd mistekk. I protest very moch, because this cruiser is meant only for mooring alongside wharf by the Edmirelty for mekking stimm for the hitters in the winter. She has been so long like this, end they cott so many holls in the side for izz going ashore end so on, she is not seft at sea. I mekk the Vice-Edmirel tekk her out because I em not so well. She sonk in very bedd pless, jost in the mouth of the harbour. It is a pity.

"After this Miranos send for me. He is now Minister of new Ministry colled Religion end Sickret Service. He say to me: 'Romanescu, now our nevvy is sonk so moch this job of Commander-in-Chiff is not so good. I think I hevv better job for you. This German penzer general has asked me plizz if it is not too moch trobble to mekk big new sickret service against England to find all the plenns end tritties end so on or maybe sommone will get shot sommtimes. He is very nice men: I will not like to refuse. You know England very well. I think it is a good job for you.'

"Et once I say: 'Sure. If you will plizz errenge I will go to England to-morrow end I will send you many nice plenns. Also there is somm good tritties in London, I think.'

"'No,' he say, 'thet is no good. I hevv tried thet myself. You must stay here in Balkania for mekking sickret service against English, pipples in Borella.'

"'What the demm!' I say. 'How is this nonsense? There is only one English in Borella now, is old Miss Fosdyke.'

"Miranos say: 'Never mind. This is smoll department et first. After, if it is big success mebbe we will get somm more English for you. First you most see if this Miss Fosdyke has any plenns or tritties. Letters from Winston Chorchill is very good also. There are many good private firms of sickret edgents in Borella, of long esteblished; you can get plenty spies from them.'

"This is very difficult for me because Miss Fosdyke is very enry old leddy, has lived in Borella now for twenty-thirty years, always kicking opp hell. She will not like all this sickret service, I think.

"I mekk somm big offices of sickret edgancy in Borella, engedge many spies. I send somm of this to Miss Fosdyke for butler, for cook, for

pentry-boy end so on. They bring me always many reports, all the letters, peppers, end so on. One day Miss Fosdyke comms to my office. 'Captain Romanescu,' she says, 'you are mekking trobble for me with my old gardener, has been with me since twenty years. It is not fair to him. All this other servants you are sending me is getting big wedges by you from sickret service. He works also jost as hard, bot I cannot pay soch wedges. You most tekk him on for sickret service also or I will kick opp hell.'

"I say: 'Certainly, Miss Fosdyke, I will do this, thank you very moch, bot plizz don't mekk trobble.'

"She say: 'Also, plizz send my letters beck sooner. I think it is better for you to errenge to photograph them in my house. See to it, plizz. Also, where are those brown pepper petterns for my winter costume, you hevv tekken since three wikk?'

"'My God,' I say, 'is that what it was? Skoda Works is building opp special copy of lettest English tenk from this.'

"One day Miranos send for me again. He say: 'Gestapo is very pazzled about all this letters from Winston Chorchill to Miss Fosdyke signed "Your lovving niss Winnie." Somm of this code they cannot understand. Who is this hosbend who is always drinking? Is it Roosevelt? You most find out. You most bring Miss Fosdyke here for strict questions.'

"'Thet is very difficult,' I say, 'because Miss Fosdyke is gone by sickret fishing-boat since yesterday to Turkey end to England.'

"'What the demm!' he say. 'How is it your spies do not tell you about all this? This is very sirrious.'

"'Because she tekk also all this spies with her to help with so moch loggagge, end so on. This demm fools never tells me or mebbe she will tekk me also.'

"Miranos is very worried about this, telephone after to tell me Gestapo is comming to tekk over my office, so I resign et once. I am too proud. Bot first I mekk it very difficult for them—brekk all the electric-light bolbs, spill the ink, end so on. This is scorched earth policy, jost like the Rossian. It is the best, I think." A. M. C.

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"Mr. Bevin is a man of big calibre, but he should recognise that there are other points of view than those of the man who sits on the top. The toad beneath the harrow knows where the shoe pinches."

The New Statesman and Nation.

By intuition.

At the Opera

"SOROTCHINTSI FAIR" (SAVOY)

It is curious to reflect that it is barely forty years since DANNREUTHER wrote of MUSSORGSKY's music that it was "wilfully eccentric" and its style was, to the Western ear, "barbarously ugly." While one can understand that to this great critic *Boris Godounov* may have seemed strange and uncouth (its pathetic creator's genius met with scant recognition from his contemporaries), it is hard for the present-day listener to find anything either ugly or eccentric in the delightful comic peasant opera, *Sorotchintsi Fair*, which is being given by a very competent Russian company at the Savoy Theatre, with the assistance of the London Symphony Orchestra. The version used is that of TCHEREPNINE, and as the composer's early death left the opera unfinished it is hard to say exactly where TCHEREPNINE's contribution begins or ends; but the music has the freshness, spontaneity and especially poignant quality characteristic of MUSSORGSKY, and abounds in delightful folk melodies.

The opera is based on a Ukrainian story by GOGOL, whose birthplace Sorotchintsi was. It concerns the wooing of *Parassia* by her peasant lover *Gritsko*; the confusion of her

amorous but scolding mother *Khivria*, who opposed the match and whose priestly lover was found by her bucolic husband concealed in a box; a gipsy, and a sportive devil with the head of a pig who haunts the fair seeking the remains of his magic scarlet coat, to the terror of everyone. The characters are excellently portrayed by the cast, but the chief honours undoubtedly go to ODA SLOBODSKAYA as *Khivria*, whose monologue in the Second Act, and the scene with her lover, are a joy both to see and to hear. She is perhaps less convincing in the First Act when scolding her drunken husband (ARSENE KIRILLOFF), for to those who do not understand Russian she neither seems very angry nor he very drunken. DARIA BAYAN and EDWARD BOLESLAWSKI are a charming pair of lovers, and it falls to Mr. PARRY JONES, as "The Popovitch," to be shut in the box. "The Night on the Bare Mountain" ballet in the Third Act is the weakest spot in the production—one would not have thought that any devil worth his salt (or his brimstone) would use a rope ladder to climb up to the ceiling—but it is a welcome change from the Walt Dismal technicoloured claptrap to which Hollywood has harnessed this same music in *Fantasia*. The London Symphony Orchestra plays well under the baton of ANATOLE FISTOULARI, and the colourful décor and costumes are by GEORGE KIRSTA.



"That's the first and last time I take our evacuees to Whipsnade."

L.T.

"OUR new postwoman," said my hostess, looking from the Rectory window. "Lizzie Didd."

"A capable-looking girl. Complete with trousers."

"Yes. Her father's, I imagine . . . Didd is an interesting man. Our bell-ringer. Not at the moment, naturally . . . He won the Darts Cup for Woansome last year. Prattle Parva was a little vexed that he did not play for this village. However, he was Woansome born, and I imagine thought his home village should come first. Mrs. Didd was the first woman here to wear rubber boots. I remember the ridicule cast on her. Now all the village wears them. How time passes . . .

"This month we exchange pulpits with Sossington-on-Sea. The Rev. Giles and Mrs. Lissum. They have specially invited you. I hope you will join us? Good . . . I am working out plans. First of all, the church work. Miss Lidley will take the Knitting Party. Fortunately nobody else wants the bother of it . . . Mrs. Lissum will undertake all my duties, except polishing the pew finials. I must find someone to do that. But who shall it be? There goes Mrs. Bogle. I wonder—Oh, Mrs. Bogle, would you come in a minute? Oh, no; no bad news. Oh, I am sorry I frightened you. I did not know I dashed out . . . I am going to ask you a favour. Can you, could you possibly polish my finials for me while we are at Sossington? Miss Moax did it last year, but, as you know, she is spending a month with her aunt at

Iddle. Oh, yes, the brass as well, please . . . Oh, no, I do not want to force duties on you, far from it . . . You are really the only person I could trust with my precious finials. Oh, you will do them. And the brass? Thank you so very, very much, Mrs. Bogle. I do not know what we should do without you. Good-bye . . .

"Mrs. Bogle often threatens to leave the village and live with her married daughter in Walm Lane, London. Do you know it? Dear, dear, she made it sound so beautiful. She has not carried out her threat as yet, but the Rector says . . . However . . .

"Now to find someone to come in and help Ada. The Lissums have two maids. It must not be a relation. Last year we gave Ada board wages, but she spent most of her time in the Rectory kitchen, hindering the Lissums' cook . . . An excellent girl, and interesting, but needs careful handling.

"Take her with us? A good idea . . . The only thing is that I should feel as if I had brought the whole village with me. Not but that I love the dear village and everybody in it. But it would not be exactly a holiday . . .

"Mrs. Tumm?—you forget. She is Ada's worst aunt. An outstanding cook, I grant you, but . . . However . . . An evacuee? I should have to let Ada choose her, and it would almost certainly be Moyra Jessop. An interesting girl, Moyra, but scarcely fitted for a clerical household.

"I will go and ask Ada if she wants help. Excuse me one moment . . .

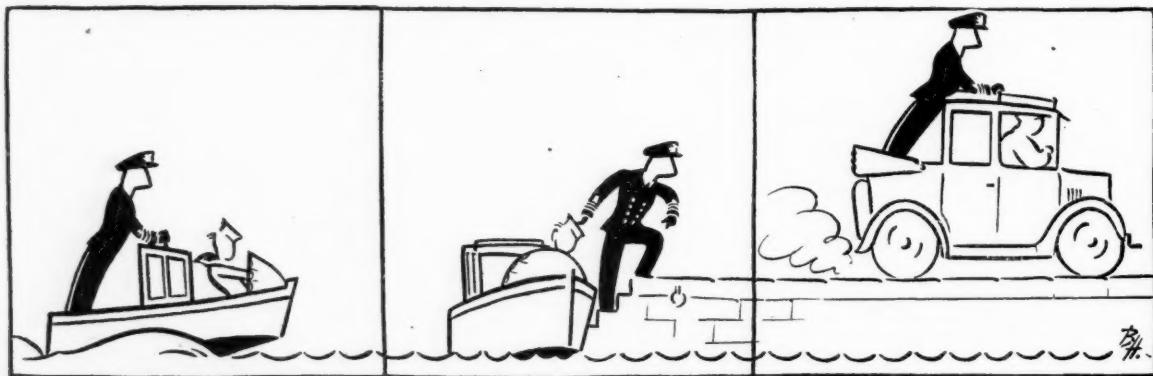
Good. She can manage by herself. Now how am I to explain to her, with the utmost tact, that her relations are not to be admitted in our absence? A problem, truly, but it must be faced. Never were so many such a nuisance to so few. However . . .

"Now for lists. Let me see. Hot-water bottles. Ah, that is important. Last autumn we took only one, and the Rector's feet were frozen . . . Sossington Rectory is a lovely house, but draughty. Mem.: Remember to take thick coats to throw over beds in case eiderdowns not enough. I should not like the Lissums to see that note. They are charming people, but they do not feel the cold . . .

"The church is interesting. E.E. and Decorated. Mr. Lissum carved the pulpit. It took him ten years. The Rector says . . . But he is not entirely just to Mr. Lissum. The Rector knows nothing whatever of wood-carving . . .

"You will like Sossington. I am always excited at the thought of it. Gardens on the front. Good shops. Broad sands. Probably minded at the moment, I imagine, but we will keep off them. There is enough to see from the promenade . . .

"The Lissums have two warm-hearted cats and a noble dog. We shall find plenty to do, I imagine . . . But when we want an hour or two's relaxation we can wander round Woolworths. There is a superb Woolworths at Sossington. And I believe a Marks and Spencers since we were there last. We ought to have a very happy holiday, don't you think?"



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